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ABSTRACT

Wellness Management has been designed as an option in the health education bachelors program at Plymouth State College of the University System of New Hampshire. The Wellness Management option was created because alumni and employers stated that graduates needed business skills in order to be more marketable and effective as health educators. The Wellness Management option was revised from the former Community Health option and now includes first aid, wellness skills, worksite and community health promotion, business writing, legal issues, accounting, marketing, a wellness management practicum, and a wellness management internship. Course assignments include helping to plan and implement a Wellness Fair for the campus community and writing a health promotion plan for a hypothetical company. (JDD)

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Creative Approaches to Health Education in Higher Education: Wellness Management Option

by Mardie E. Burckes-Miller, EdD., CHES

Today the field of Health Education is changimg rapidly. Higher Education needs to keep abreast of the field and continuosly evaluate their programs. The purpose of this paper is to share the process of creating a new option in a Health Education major at a small college. The process of designing and implementing the option will be discussed as well as the course content which make up the option. Wellness Management is an option within the Health Education Bachelors program at Plymouth State College of the University System of New Hampshire. Plymouth State College is a state college of approximately 4500 students. The Health Education major is housed within the Department of Health, Physical Education, Recreation Department which is the third largest department on campus with approximately 330 majors. The major for Health Education was started in 1981-82. The major has grown from a handful to close to 80 students.

The mission of the Health Educations program is to serve its students by providing a Bachelor's of Science in Health Education. Students choose among three options for professional preparation; Athletic Training, for work in schools and clincs; School Health, which leads to teacher certification in Health Education K-12 ; and Wellness Management (approved in 1992), for work in the

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private or public sector. Wellness Management was a revision and renaming of the Community Health option which had been in existence since 1986-87. Students who desire only a Bachelor's of Science in Health Education with no professional preparation in an option may choose to complete the degree with no option. The goal of the Health Education proram is to promote, maintain and improve individual and community health through the educational process.

Every student enrolled in the Bachelors program must complete the college's requirements, i.e. General Education courses called Perspectives, have library and computer knowledge which must be demonstrated by a class or an acceptable test score, have a minor or 12 credits upper division (junior/senior level courses). Every student majoring in Health Education must complete all Health Education Core requirements and earn a 2.0 GPA in order to graduate. All students with a Wellness Management or School Health option must have a 2.5 before they enroll in an internship or student teaching.

The Health Education Core is a 52 credit required core for all students majoring in Health Education. It was designed to include the ten content areas identified as the basis of Health Education: community health, mental and emotional health,family life, nutrition, personal health, prevention and control of disease and disorders, injury and accident prevention,

environmental health, consumer health and substance use and abuse (Report of the 1990 Joint Committee on Health Education, 1991). The responsibility for which entry level health educators is best known is the delivery of direct health education services: teaching, counseling, consulting, community organizing and the use of media (Greene 1990). These five responsibilities , as well as the seven responsibilities (Assessing, Planning, Implementing, Evaluating, Coordinating, Acting as a Resource and Communicating Health Education needs, Concerns and Resources) National Commission for Health Education Credentialing, Inc. 1985) and 118 competancies identified by the National Commission for the Credentialing of Health Education are woven into the Health Education Core and option courses. The program's focus is to prepare students to become Certified Health Education Specialists.

Health Education Core

Introduction to Health Promotion
CPR/First Aid
Drug Behavior
Stress Management
Environmental Issues in Health and Disease
Mental Health Issues
Evaluation and Research in Health Promotion
Sex and Family Living
Program Planning in Health Promotion
Instructional Methods in Health Promotion
Exercise Theory and Programming
Nutrition or Applied Nutrition
Anatomy and Physiology I & II and Labs
General Psychology or Developmental Psychology
Sociology of Health Care
Multicultural Education

The idea of a Wellness Management option came about when the Health Education Coordinator surveyed and discussed strengths and weaknesses of the program with alumni, supervisors and employers of students. Most of the survey group felt that business skills should be a component of the Community Health option. Skills in accounting, marketing, and working in a business setting were areas which were repeatedly mentioned in the surveys and discussions. The Health Education Coordinator was aware of two Masters level programs in Wellness Management, one at Ball State University and one at Central Florida University. These programs were analyzed and the Health Education Coordinator started planning an undergraduate Wellness Management option which would replace the existing Community Health option. The Coordinator discussed what business courses should be included in the option with the Business Department Chairperson. The

Chairperson suggested a Legal Issues course. After analyzing the survey and reflecting on discussions with alumni, current students, employers and supervisors it was felt that some type of business writing course needed to be included. The English Department was consulted and their Technical Writing course was added to the preliminary draft of the proposal.

The idea from the Coordinator began in the summer of 1991. It then had to meet approval at various levels; Health Education faculty, Chair, Department, effective departments although these departments had been contacted initially, the Curriculum Committee, Faculty Executive Committee, a full Faculty meeting, Dean of the College, President, a Systemwide Policies Committee of the University System of New Hampshire, and finally the Board of Regents. The Wellness Management option became effective in September of 1993. Therefore, it took two years to get approval at all the various campus levels. Since Plymouth State College is part of the Unversity of New Hampshire System the proposal had to go to a University systemwide committee to make sure that there was no overlap in any other academic program at the other institutions. The Wellness Management option of 31 credits has been revised very slightly because of other changes to the Health Education program based on accredidation reports.

Wellness Management Option

Financial Accounting
Legal Environment of Business
Principles of Marketing
Organizational Behavior
Technical Writing
CPR and First Aid Instructor
Wellness Skills for Health Professionals
Worksite and Community Health Promotion
Wellness Management Practicum
Wellness Management Internship

The focus of the Wellness Management program has been to make the professional theory courses as practicval as possible. There are two main Health Education upper level theory courses in the Wellness Management option. Worksite and Community Health Promotion is a course which focuses on basic principles of worksite health promotion. A major part of the course is planning and implementing a Wellness Fair for the campus community. Students base the fair around the seven dimensions of Wellness used at Plymouth State College. These include Social, Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Career/ Occupational, Environmental and Spiritual.

Another course assignement is for students to write a business plan. They are allocated a budget of $25,000 and they are told that they were just hired as a Health Promotion Director for a company. Each student is given a fictional target group and they must design a year long Health Promotion program. Some of the groups included, 150 school district employees, a small town (under 10,000) fire and police department, a health club located in a city of

50,000. Another assignment was for students to develop an original brochure for the general public on a health topic, i.e. heart disease, stretching principles, or osteoporosis. This class studies radability and analyzes various pamphlets created by voluntary agencies, state and federal government and for profit businesses. It is estimated that the average reading ability is 6th - 8th grade while the level of most health materials were for 10th grade or higher (Root, 1994). The students pamphlets had to be designed for sixth grade reading level.

The second upper level Health education class which they take is called Wellness Skills for Health Professionals. It is a skills oriented class. Students receive instructor/facilitator certifications for Breast Self Examination, Testicular Self Examination, and Smoking Cessation (FreshStart) from the American Cancer Society, Healthy Dividends (a nutrition program to help people Lower their fat budget) and a Labelease (food labeling program). The class also allows students to use Health Risk Appraisals and to practice counseling skills with fictional characters. The class also covers topics such as How to set up a Back care program and what types of aerobic certifications Health Educators would be eligible for. The Wellness Skills class implements a Health Fair for the community. There are a number of free health screenings available to community members. The students each have to plan and implement as 30 minute seminar on a Health topic,

i.e. Eating on the Run, Getting in shape for skiing, CPR, etc. Each student is responsible to advertise, create handouts/pamphlets and evaluation forms for their own sessions. They also must contribute to the advertising and marketing procedures of the whole Health Fair. Students write radio announcements, have a budget, and invite health professionals for the screenings.

Students in Wellness Skills class also write a grant for $25,000 to implement a health promotion program for a college campus. The student who writes the best grant based on standard criteria is awarded a $25.00 gift certificate to a local restaurant.

The Wellness Mamagement option was created because alumni and employers stated that they needed business skills to be more marketable and effective as a health educator. Psychology courses were dropped from the Community Health option and the business courses were added. The Wellness Management option began as a vision by the Health Educator Coordinator. With hard work and dedication a vion can become a reality.

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